

To the members of the Maryland House:

As lifelong resident of Baltimore City, having graduated from Baltimore City Public Schools, with family roots in our state going back to the 17th century, I must speak up in opposition to this deeply-flawed legislation.

This law will render thousands of Marylanders into felons for hobbyist gunsmithing that has been legal since before Maryland was a state. It will have no effect on improving public safety, much as previous gun control legislation passed in 2013 regarding “assault weapons” and implementing handgun permit requirements have failed to do.

If Maryland Democrats sought to reduce crime they could use their veto-proof majority to legalize recreational marijuana, cut into gang profits, and reduce opportunities for cannabis users to discover harder drugs. If the point of this legislation were to reduce the number of unserialized guns used in crime, the law could be more narrowly focused and offer harsher penalties for those caught committing a crime with an unserialized firearm. If this were a public safety bill and not a bill to criminalize all hobbyist gunsmiths, it would offer a legal process for hobbyists to continue to build and serialize their firearms as California does.

As a lifelong resident of Baltimore City this bill will do nothing to address violent crime here – homemade firearms are but a small minority of firearms seized in Baltimore. I have been robbed at gunpoint working in the city more than once, and each time it has been a commercially-built, stolen firearm, not a model of the type built from a 3D print or 80% receiver. This bill will do nothing to address the root causes of gun violence in Baltimore City – endemic poverty, the lack of economic and educational opportunities in the city, and the ongoing War on Drugs. Guns – overwhelmingly stolen, commercially-built guns – will continue to flow into economically distressed parts of our state as long as those dire socioeconomic realities remain.

In conclusion, and to reiterate, in no way can I as a private citizen support this bill as written.

-Joshua Bailey